

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CLEMENCY FOR FALN TERRORISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the House did not get an opportunity earlier this week to discuss the Senate's resolution condemning the President's decision to grant clemencies to members of the FALN.

I draw Members' attention to the USA Today's headline, "FALN Brought Bloody Battle Into America's Streets." Let me read part of this newspaper article.

The Puerto Rican separatist group FALN exploded into public view on January 24, 1975, by attacking an icon of American history. It quickly became the most feared domestic terrorist group operating on U.S. soil.

The 1975 bombing of the Fraunces Tavern in New York City, where General George Washington bid farewell to his troops in 1783, left four dead and 54 wounded. It was the deadliest of more than 130 attacks linked to this group from 1974 to 1987, when most members were jailed.

Some Members here feel we are wasting our time talking about an issue that is already a fait accompli because the President has in fact signed the clemency and they are out of jail. They say we should be discussing social issues important to the American people.

Let me tell the Members, that is exactly what we are doing here in discussing the clemencies for FALN Members. We are talking about whether we should be a society that tolerates violence or a society that condemns it. It seems to me the people who propose more gun control measures, and some of it was discussed here today, as a solution to prevent future tragic acts of violence are the same ones who preach forgiveness and understanding for past acts of violence.

Following this twisted logic, we should create new gun control laws and then offer clemency to the people convicted of violating those laws.

It sounds like a bizarre scenario to me. But anyone who supports the President's decision to offer clemency to Members of the FALN is not serious about locking up those who violate our Nation's existing gun laws.

Of the 16 terrorists offered clemency by the President, 12 were convicted of

the following violations of Federal firearm laws:

Possession of an "unregistered firearm," a machine gun or sawed-off rifle or shotgun. Twelve were convicted of those crimes.

Nine were carrying a firearm during the commission of a seditious conspiracy and interference with interstate commerce by violence.

Nine were arrested and convicted for interstate transportation of firearms with the intent to commit seditious conspiracy and interference with interstate commerce by violence;

Three, conspiracy to make a "destructive device", such as a pipe bomb;

Two, possession of a firearm without a serial number.

These are people we let out of jail last week. For anyone who thinks that these terrorists will now be model citizens, let me share with them the 1997 statistics from the Bureau of Justice. Of the 108,580 persons released from prisons in 11 States in 1983, representing more than half of all released State prisoners that year, an estimated 62.5 percent were rearrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within 3 years, 46 percent were reconvicted, 41 percent returned to jail. A high recidivism rate, I would assume.

Maybe those same people we let out last week will have a chance to display their good citizenship, as they did when they maimed, injured, and killed others.

I do not care if those offered clemency actually pulled the trigger, detonated the bomb, or drove the get-away car. The fact is they were active members of a terrorist organization dedicated to violence. Now they are free by an act of this president. That is more than a shame, it is tragic.

Let me also read, because people say that it is time for healing, time to get along, time to accept their apologies, time to recognize they have said they are sorry. Let us let them out of jail.

Jailhouse statements of FALN Members given clemency contrast with their recently stated claims to have renounced violence.

In October, 1995, for example, Luis Rosa, Alicia Rodriguez, and Carlos Torres told the Chicago Tribune that they have nothing to be sorry for and have no intention of renouncing armed revolution.

Another FALN member granted clemency, Ricardo Jimenez, told the judge in his case, "We are going to fight. Revolutionary justice will take care of you and everyone else." I think that is a fairly strong threat.

Talk about four killed, 54 injured.

On October 26, five bombings in downtown New York City, more than \$1 million in damage.

December 11, New York police were called to an upper east side building to collect a dead body. A booby-trap was set for them. A police officer was injured and lost an eye.

June 15, two bombs detonated in Chicago's loop area.

February, 1973, Merchandise Mart in Chicago bombed, damage totaled \$1.3 million.

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August 3, 1977, Mobil Oil employment office in New York bombed, one killed, several injured; November 1979, two Chicago military recruiting offices and an armory bombed; March 1980, FALN members seized the Carter-Mondale campaign office.

My colleagues, these people should not have been released. This is an outrage, and the citizens of America should recognize it for what it is. It was a political act and not a just act.

FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO ROUBEN SHUGARIAN, OUT-GOING AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I spoke about the 8th anniversary of the Independence of the Armenian Republic, which is celebrated by the citizens of Armenia and by people of Armenian descent here in the United States on September 21. But one individual who has played a significant role in solidifying the bonds between the United States and Armenia during these early years of Armenian independence is the current ambassador, Rouben Shugarian. Mr. Shugarian has represented Armenia in Washington since March 1, 1993, and in a few weeks Ambassador Shugarian will be leaving Washington to take another post in the foreign ministry in Yerevan, Armenia's capital. Still only in his late 30s, Ambassador Shugarian obviously has a great future ahead of him in service to the Armenian Republic.

During his very distinguished tenure here, Ambassador Shugarian has done a great deal to help raise the profile of Armenia in the Capitol of the free world. For his efforts, he has earned the respect of Members of Congress, the administration, and his colleagues from many other nations in the Washington diplomatic corps. He has also earned the gratitude of the Armenian-American community for helping to advance Armenia's cause, while making the embassy an important focal point for Armenian Americans.

When Ambassador Shugarian arrived in Washington, Armenia did not really have an embassy per se, making do with cramped office space. But during his tenure, the Armenian mission in Washington moved to a beautiful facility in the embassy row area near Massachusetts Avenue. The physical presence of the embassy and its central location serves to symbolize Armenia's